

# The Comparison of the Effectiveness of Teaching Spirituality and Resiliency with Efficacy among High School Students in Iran

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## Abstract

In recent decades, with the rise of research in the field of psychology of religion, the consequences of moral excellences have been increased. The aim of this study is to compare the effectiveness of teaching spirituality and resiliency with the efficacy of high school girl students in Sabzevar, Iran. Efficacy which was investigated in this study is one of the most effective components of happiness. 60 high school students were chosen randomly through Volunteer sampling and their accessibility, then divided randomly into the experimental and control groups. Spiritual Intelligence Questionnaire, Oxford Happiness Questionnaire, and Connor-Davidson Resiliency Scale (CD-RISC) were used to gather required data. The results indicated that in comparison to the average efficiency of the students in control group and according to the average efficiency of the students in experimental group, teaching spirituality and resiliency increased the average efficiency of the students in the experimental groups. Therefore the hypothesis of this study was confirmed and based on the efficacy; there was a significant difference between the students in the experimental and control groups which means teaching spirituality has more effectiveness on the students' efficacy than teaching resiliency.

**Keywords:** spirituality, resiliency, efficacy

## Introduction

Moral excellences can be considered a manifestation of the intrinsic religiosity (Piedmont, 2004). Spirituality is an inner need of human being which some experts believe, it ensures the highest levels of cognitive, moral and emotional development and also continuous efforts to answer various whys of life (West, 2004). Spiritual intelligence as the foundation for one's beliefs play a fundamental role in various fields, particularly the promotion and provision of mental health and also the importance of happiness in mental health, physical health, and efficacy and community participation has been the forefront of Psychology. The importance of human spirituality and spiritual growth in the past few decades were increasingly given more attention by psychologists and mental health experts.

The Progress of psychology on the one hand and dynamic and complex nature of modern societies on the other hand, has made the spiritual needs stand against the human desires and material needs and got more attention in a way that the World Health Organization indicated the physical, psychological, social and spiritual aspects in defining the aspects of human existence and the role of the spiritual aspects in growing and developing human being. Spirituality means the role of life, a way to live, and getting experiences which is created with an awareness of spiritual aspects and determines detectable values (Elkins et al, 1988). Spirituality is a great sense which increases the sense of passion and interest for justice and fairness and creates conformance and consistency with itself and the universe (Tacey, 2003).

The emphasis on spirituality in educational organizations is increasingly influenced by its role and importance among educational theorists in recent years. In recent years, spirituality in education as the human aspect or feature which has significantly connected to the human's health has been addressed (Edwards & Fry, 2003; Fry & Cohen, 2009; Zohar & Marshall, 2001; Yang, 2006; McDonald, 2002).

### **Statement of the problem**

Adolescence is a time when brings about lots of spiritual problems to our children. Meanwhile, the girls are very vulnerable to these problems, so teaching spiritual intelligence (spirituality) and resiliency could influence their efficacy and happiness. The importance of human spirituality and spiritual growth in the past few decades, have increasingly drawn psychologists and mental health experts' attention.

The Progress of psychology on the one hand and dynamic and complex nature of modern societies on the other hand, has made the spiritual needs stand against the human desires and material needs and got more attention in a way that the World Health Organization indicated the physical, psychological, social and spiritual aspects in defining the aspects of human existence and the role of the spiritual aspects in growing and developing human being. Despite scientists' increasing emphasis on the spiritual aspects of human development, unique definition which includes spiritual integrity has not been provided yet (West, 2004). Nowadays Studies related to spirituality and its role in health, happiness and self-actualization and growth are a new and growing topic in a way that American Psychological Association reported the research on spiritual health as thriving area of studies. In recent years, according to the talents and abilities of people (instead of addressing anomalies and impairments), positive psychology approach have been studied by psychologists (Vahidi, 2012). Ultimate goals of this approach are to identify structures and methods that would led to the welfare and happiness of people. Therefore the factors that cause the adjustment of the man's needs and threats to their life are the most basic structures of this approach. In the meantime, teaching spirituality and resiliency have received special place in the field of developmental psychology, family psychology and mental health, so that the number of studies on this field are added nowadays.

Garnezy & Masten (1991) defined resiliency as the ability of a process, or outcome of successful adaptation to threatening circumstances. In other words, resilience is positive adaptation in response to adverse conditions (Waller, 2001). Resiliency prevents the psychological problems in adolescents and young adults and protects them from the psychological impact of problematic disasters (Pinkort, 2009). Religious attitude and sense of purpose are the examples of resiliency and protective factors (Perkins, 2004). Spirituality is the need to escape from everyday life and integration with someone else. This awareness may lead to an experience beyond ourselves (Kerichton, 2008).

Aymonz defined the spirituality, based on Gardner's definition of intelligence. He believes that spirituality is a form of intelligence which anticipates the performance and compatibility of people and helps them in solving problems (King, 2008). A person with high moral intelligence has flexibility, capacity to inspire awareness and intuition and holistic view of the universe searching for answers to the fundamental questions of life and criticizing the traditions and customs. Spiritual intelligence enable human to change the situation (Samadi, 2005). Teaching Spirituality and the resiliency against the problems can remove sorrows and increase the happiness and efficacy in people. This study was conducted to find evidences of the effectiveness of teaching spirituality and resiliency with the efficacy of girl students and how well the components of resiliency and

spirituality can influence their efficiencies. So the question of this research is whether teaching spirituality and resiliency can impact on the students' efficacy.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Spirituality***

In recent decades, mystical and spiritual topics regained their positions, and the experts in the fields of Mysticism, philosophy, art, literature and psychology emphasize the miraculous role of spirituality and spiritual values in response to the needs of human evolution, treatment of adversity and mental illness, and to achieve mental health (karimi, 2004). Religion has been a topic in psychology since long time ago. First, William James, in his book "Types of Spiritual Experiences in Human" paid attention to the religions (Spilka, Hood, Hunsberger & Gorsuch, 2003). He believed that religions are not customs, traditions, provisions and beliefs because they are just faith appearance. James also believed people feel relaxed with reference to religions, and belief in the existence of a higher value and a higher power is essential for mental health (Winston, 2001). Wilbur and Heron believe that our growth as human beings includes growth in the spiritual realms (west, 1999). Yung's psychology concerned with the first movement in psychology was strongly influenced by the Eastern spirituality and put it's better to turn to spiritual or mystical teachings of Buddhism (Azad, 2005). Erich Fromm, Contemporary psychologist, emphasized The Importance of Eastern Philosophy and its vacancy on the structure of western industrial societies and expressed the individuality of people have taken to the games and whatever called virtues and practices of the industrialized world are used to put a gap between human soul and themselves (Hashemi, 2005). Maslow created a fusion of psychology and spirituality and called it as perfect psychology. The concept of self-actualization that Maslow pointed out and believed to develop ourselves to the highest levels, are driven from Eastern spirituality (Azad, 2005). One of the components of a healthy lifestyle is considering the spiritual needs in human beings. Since human is a biological, psychological, social and spiritual creature, so all human needs must be considered in their lives. Spirituality based on the monotheistic world, promotes human life style in which harmful behaviors would gradually be decreased and healthy behaviors increased (Kalantari , 2007).

Nathaniel Beranden says, our humanity and personality depends on the degree of integration of our spirituality and wisdom (Hashemi, 2000). Hey & Moris (1987) believed that the roots of spirituality and spiritual experiences would be beneficial for human health. The role of Eastern Spirituality on Gestalt therapy has clearly been obvious (Clarkson, 1998). By confirming the human need to spirituality as a psychological fact, Yung indicated spiritual experiences as potentially healthy aspects of human existence (West, 1999). Pargament (1997) said people have realized that spirituality helps them maintain their health. When people are faced with a crisis, apply their spirituality as a coping method. Elkins (1999) believed that spirituality is essential to human happiness and mental health. Fishr (2000) said, considering the spiritual aspects of life have great effect on loving a perfect life. Basically the premise of mental health, minus the religious spirituality and mystical wisdom, is impossible due to incorrect anthropology. Mental health center at metaphysical levels, without mysticism and monotheistic religion, is weak and fragile.

### ***Resiliency***

Resiliency is one of the normative issues addressed and studied in positive psychology and most studies on Resiliency have been conducted in the field of developmental Psychology (Luthar & Ciechetti, 2000; Masten, 2001). Resiliency is the ability of individuals to adapt effectively to the environment, despite exposure to risk factors. Risk factors are those negative conditions associated with negative outcomes and behavioral problems (Gomez & McLaren, 2006). Kordich-hall & Pearson (2005) have expressed it is completely tangible that people required to learn some skills and

apply them in order to think resiliently when run into the problems and stressful situations. Hence, interventions that aim to impress the thinking processes could take an important step in the development of skills and abilities related to their resiliency.

Resiliency has been described as the ability to adapt to adverse conditions including Individual merit, trusting the inner forces, accepting changes as positive factors and spiritual impact (Connor et al, 2003; Masten, 2001). Resiliency will be increased by reducing the risk factors and being exposed to them, increasing the capacity of individuals in coping with stress, strengthening family protective processes and Strengthening their self-esteem and self-efficacy (Connor et al, 2003; Khalil, 2003). According to Korhonen(2007), Although resiliency is kind of individual characteristics and the consequences of other people's environmental experiences, but humans are not the victim of our heredity or environment. People can be trained to increase their capacity of resiliency by learning some skills. People's reactions to stress, unpleasant events, and problems could be changed, so that they would be able to overcome the negative environmental problems. Resiliency training to the students in a regular classroom instruction can grow and improve their perspectives towards life, Limit and control their depression and boost their grades (Psychological Society of America, 2009). According to Rainer and Montague (2000), the development of resiliency may be an important strategy in an attempt to reverse this trend through more emphasis on the factors that increase welfare, not only for detecting and eliminating risk factors (Newman, 2002).

### ***Efficacy***

Self-efficacy is one of the important factors in Bandura's social cognitive theory and means individuals' self- confidence and belief in their abilities to control their thoughts, feelings, activities and effective reactions in the stressful situations. Therefore, it impacts on the actual performance of individuals, emotions, choices, handling effective events, organizing and conducting practical courses required to achieve the performance levels and progress, and finally the efforts that a person makes ( Kaprara , Frates and Esteka , 2002; Regaliya & Bandura, 2002).

Self-efficacy as a personality variable has an important role in coping with life's problems (Brown and Aneuploidy, 1978; Kaprara et al, 2005). As a predictor for personality traits, self - efficacy is considered an effective factor in education and training opportunities, (salami and Ogundokun, 2009, Capra et al, 2005). Capra et al (2005) found self -efficacy in trusting our own abilities to succeed in a particular field and argued that the influencing levels of individuals and their activities are based more on beliefs and objective assessment than objective measures. Therefore, how people behave can often be predicted by their beliefs about their abilities and what they can do. Self -efficacy is a person's belief about his ability to make selective areas of the manual which forms and leads the effective events of his life (Caprara et al, 2006). These beliefs would influence ways of thinking, feeling, motivation or behaviors. Strong sense of self -efficacy may improve positive attitudes and better participation of the individual in performing the tasks, set goals and commitment (Strobel et al 2011).

Early studies in the field of self -efficacy investigated it in relation to the specific tasks. Recent studies in this area have expanded the concept of self -efficacy to a larger concept and as general self-efficacy (Caprara et al, 2006). General self-efficacy is the confidence level of a person's ability to successfully manage a variety of applications, new situations, and factors causing stress (Pomaki et al 2009). Satinder Heyman & John Marcus (2011) offered the role of spirituality and preparing spirituality courses and workshops needed in the workplace.

This research aims to present the experiences and results of academic courses on spirituality in the workplace when large companies' greed and organizational instability are rumored which reduces the volatility. Hodi et al (2010) showed that religious people are more satisfied with their life, and conversely, those who are weak in terms of religion, they are less satisfied. In most studies,

a significant positive relationship between religion and happiness has been reported. Barack Hold, et al (2010) found a significant relationship between spirituality and happiness and efficacy. Lim and Putnam (2010) indicated in their study that religious people are more satisfied with their life.

Vantash kuma (2008) reported that there is a positive relationship between all subscales of religious attitude and happiness. In 2011, after extensive examination of the various American universities, Noel Levitz Institute found that students' grades and GPA, was significantly associated with their satisfaction, efficient, and happiness. Pomaki et al (2009) concluded that self -efficacy with positive consequences on mental health could be an effective factor in mental wellbeing or happiness. They showed that people who have higher self-efficacy, are more satisfied with their lives, so they will have more happiness. Kaykhosrvany (2012) in a study entitled "to determine the relationship between mental health and spiritual intelligence resiliency" concluded that mental health and spiritual intelligence significantly predict resiliency, since people with high mental health show higher degrees of resiliency, it can be concluded that the provision of supportive factors (such as religion and spirituality) to improve mental health and spiritual intelligence can increase resiliency.

Zamirinejad (2012) in his study entitled "comparing the effectiveness of resiliency training in groups and group cognitive therapy in reducing depression among dormitory female students" concluded that resiliency training and cognitive therapy are effective in reducing depression among dormitory female students. Najafi et al (2011) in a study titled "qualitative and quantitative study of the relationship among spirituality, happiness, professional abilities of teachers" concluded that there was a significant positive correlation between spirituality and happiness with capabilities, and also, between happiness and capabilities.

### **Hypothesis**

1. Spirituality and Resiliency training will increase the efficacy of girl students in high school.

### **Methodology**

This was a quasi- experimental study in which a pretest-posttest design with control group was implemented. First, happiness, spirituality and resiliency questionnaires were given to the students in the experimental and control groups. Then resiliency and spirituality were taught to the experimental groups. At the end of the course experimental and control groups were retested by the same questionnaires used in pretest. Spirituality was taught in 10 sessions, and resiliency in 12 sessions.

### **Results**

Spirituality and Resiliency training will increase the efficacy of girl students in high school.

As it can be seen in table1, there was a significant difference between the high school girl students' scores on the pre-test of happiness in the experimental and control groups ( $F= 55.00$ ,  $P < 0.0001$ ), therefore the hypothesis of this study was confirmed. The amount of effect or differences is 0.66, in other words, 66 percent of individual differences on the post-test mean scores of happiness about the efficacy were due to teaching spirituality and resiliency (group membership). Statistical power is 1.00, in other words, there is no possibility of type II errors. Significant difference between groups by using analysis of covariance does not show any differences between these groups, hence the Bonferroni post hoc analysis was used that the results are shown in table 2.



**Table 1: The results of analyzing the covariance of a variable (ANCOVA) on the post-test mean scores of happiness on the students' efficacy in the experimental and control groups by considering the pre-test.**

Statistical power	Eta-square	Significant level of p	F	Mean square	Degrees of freedom	Sum of squares	Source of variation	Variable
0.057	0.01	0.810	0.059	0.114	1	0.114	pre-test	Efficacy
1.00	0.66	0.0001	55.00	107.43	2	214.86	Group	
				1.95	56	109.38	Error	

**Table 2: The results of Bonferroni post hoc test and the post-test mean scores of happiness on the students' efficacy in the experimental and control groups by considering the pre-test.**

Control group	Resiliency	Spirituality	Mean scores	Groups	
★ (p=0.0001)	★ (p=0.0001)		15.25	Spirituality	1
★ (p=0.0001)			12.95	Resiliency	2
			10.60	Control group	3

As indicated in table 2, there was a significant difference between the students' mean scores on the post-test of happiness on the students' efficacy in the first experimental group (spirituality), second experimental group (resiliency) and control group. In other words, in comparison to the average efficiency of the students in control group and according to the average efficiency of the students in experimental group, teaching spirituality and resiliency increased the average efficiency of the students in the experimental groups. Therefore the hypothesis of this study was confirmed and also there was a significant difference between the students' happiness in the two experimental groups (spirituality and resiliency), on the students' efficacy. The findings declared teaching spirituality had more effectiveness than teaching resiliency, on the students' efficacy. The findings of this study are similar to the findings of the study conducted by Najafi et al (2011) entitled "Qualitative and quantitative study of the relationship among spirituality, happiness, professional abilities of teachers" concluded that there was a significant positive correlation between spirituality and happiness with capabilities, and also, between happiness and capabilities.

### Conclusion

Spirituality is one of the happiness factors. Levinson and Graf (1973) introduced spirituality tendency as one of the wonderful jolly activities. The true spirituality makes people calmer, happier, and more peaceful. Spirituality, in addition to helping people to have a positive attitude toward their lives, helps them to control their lives in difficult and annoying situations. In all educational systems and curricula of various countries, the perfect human training, has always been proposed as an ideal or ultimate training goals. In other words, providing the necessary educational background to detect and restore spirituality and students' talents can play an effective role in the higher education system in the field of educating a perfect and well-educated person which leads to increase in people's happiness and resiliency. Thus happiness and self-efficacy can be considered as effective variables in academic success and achievement. Evaluating self-efficacy in situations like academic achievement including various aspects and depending on different factors is significantly important. Apparently, successful or unsuccessful previous experiences in life can create relatively stable,

situational, repeatable and measurable emotions in the field of self-efficacy that can be called a good predictor for students' academic performances. Academic achievement and demographic factors significantly associated with happiness and self-efficacy in students. Better understanding of these factors in experimental and longitudinal studies can be used to determine clear causal relationships between such variables and help to promote mental health among students. Furthermore, recognizing the factors which have a determining role in improving the quality of education and training of students, qualitative planning to further strengthening these factors will be possible.

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